DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 219 363 SP 020 552

AUTHOR Bossing, Lewis; Ruoff, Nancy
TITLE A Review of the Effects of Stress on the Teaching-Learning Process.
PUB DATE [82]
NOTE 42p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adolescents; Anxiety; *Children; Classroom Environment; Educational Research; Elementary Secondary Education; *Gifted; *Individual Needs; Job Satisfaction; Learning Processes; Mental Retardation; *Stress Variables; Student Attitudes; *Teacher Burnout; Teacher Response; Teaching Methods

ABSTRACT

Literature on the impact of stress on various elements in the teaching-learning process in the school environment is reviewed. Writings and research findings on stress are discussed in relation to: (1) children and adolescents; (2) gifted students; (3) mentally handicapped student; (4) teachers; (5) teacher stress as it affects learning; and (6) student stress as it affects classroom environment. A summary notes that "systematic research on teacher burnout and student stress is scanty." Lifelong human needs are identified as the need to be a unique person, to belong to someone or something, to have events in one's life have meaning, and the need to have variety and change. Suggestions are made for teachers and students in preventing and dealing with stress. (JD)

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A REVIEW OF THE EFFECTS OF STRESS ON THE TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS

DR. LEWIS BOSSING
MURRAY STATE UNIVERSITY

MS. NANCY RUOFF
PADUCAH CITY SCHOOLS

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INTRODUCTION

One of the most common problems or conditions that attacks all people, at all ages, is stress. Stress is a normal condition of living in today's complex society. Stress is the bodys physical, mental and chemical reactions to circumstances that frighten, excite, confuse endanger or irritate. The cause of stress, the stressor or stressful event, can be negative or positive.

Stress is an everday fact of life. One can not avoid it. Stress is produced by any change to which one must adjust. Stressful events are often though of as being negative, such as injury, illness, or the death of a loved one. They also can be positive. Getting a new home or a promotion brings with it the stress of change of status and new responsibilities. Falling in love can, for some people be as stressful as falling out of love.

Stress is experienced from three basic sources; the individuals environment, body and thoughts. The environment bombards people with demands to adjust. The second source of stress is physiological. The rapid growth of adolescence, aging, illness, accidents, poor diet, and sleep disturbances all tax the body. Environmental threats also produce body changes which are themselves stressful. Reaction to problems, demands and dangers is very much influenced by an innate "fight

or flight" response which is inherited from primitive ancestors. Our predessors tended to pass on to their children, through natural selection, any advantage over enemies in a hostile competitive world. As a result, man as a part of biochemical makeup has the innate tendency to prepare to flight or flee whenever they feel threatened.

In simple terms, the body undergoes changes when it experiences the "fight or flight" response; when impinging stimili are interpreted as threatening, the regulating centers give the body information to speed up in preparation to confront or escape the threat. If the body is not given relief from the biochemical changes that occur during the "fight or flight" response chronic stress may result. The third source of stress derives from one's thoughts. How experience is interpreted and labled and what one predicts for the future can either relax or stress.

Good or bad, stress is here to stay; brought to new heights by the twentieth century psyche. Every historic era can be traced by its characteristic ailments: the Middle Ages were dominated by the Great Plague and leprosy; the Renaissance was characterized by syphilis; the Baroque Era was marked by deficiency diseases such as scurvy and luxury diseases such as gout; the Romantic period was linked with tuberculosis and similar ailments; and the nineteenth century, with its rapid

industrialization and the development of cities, brought about general nervousness and neuroses. And now man has the twentieth century, where tension headaches, high blood pressure and peptic ulcers keep pace with the Dow-Jones average, and where the oscillation of the economy can be traced by the ebb and flow of tranquilizer prescriptions (Gasner, 1975).

One of the major factors contributing to our twentieth century stress-dieases is our future shocked society where people experience too much change in too short a time; where home is a place to leave or a place to keep up with the Joneses; where technology feeds upon knowledge and knowledge expands at a phenomenal rate; and where even friends don't last (Toffler, 1970).

Today we are moving into a post-individual era dominated by computers and the information revolution. Already in the United States, service and white-collar workers outnumber factory workers; and the increasing use of robots, automation and the minaturization will have eventually the same effect on the factory that the tractor and the reaper had on the farm. Before the industrial revolution, about sixty percent of the population lived on farms; today barely six percent engage in farming. The percentage of factory workers will probably shrink similarly.

Like the industrial revolution the information revolution will transform family structure, educational

modes, and most certainly, communication networks. Although the final stage of the family, the school and the communication networks remains unknown, rapid social change does not. At such times, when the very warp and woof of a society are in transition, the populace experiences extraordinary pressure to adapt to societal change, consequently undergoing tremendous stress. It is in this contemporary context of enormous stress that the pressure of children to grow up quickly must be approached (Elkind, 1981).

While change often brings prosperity, any event that changes one's life pattern or style, according to Holmes and Rahe (1967), also creates stress. Over a period of twenty-five years, Holmes and Rahe have identified and refined forty-three common stress-producting experiences in life, including changes in family, occupation, personal relationships, finance, religion, health and residence. They associate a weighted number from one hundred to eleven with each event, according to its stress-producting potential. Numerous medical studies have indicated that the total numbers of life change units (LCU's) is predictive of changes in health.

Meyer Friedman and Ray Rosenman investigated the relationship between stress and personality type (Sylwester, 1977). They identified two opposite personality types. Type A is composed of people seemingly under constant

stress. They become very aggressive, competitive and impatient in their desperate struggle to achieve more and more in less and less time. Type B is composed of people more relaxed about life. They are relatively free of time urgency, hostility, and competitiveness.

The chronic emotional struggle and anger that characterizes the Type A personality takes its toll. The constant discharge of excess hormones into the body's system can lead to serious cardiovascular problems. Type A people are almost three times more likely to end up with coronary heart disease than Type B.

It is apparant that stress does affect the school environment for teachers and students. The purpose of this review is to examine literature relative to the impact of stress on the various elements in the teaching-learning process. Synthesis of those finding may allow educators to function more effectively in stress producing situations.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Children and Stress

Not everything a student learns in school is encompassed in the formal curriculum. An important part of everyone's learning is viewing the world around him.

Students learn from the way the school is organized, the ways administrators interact with teachers, the ways teachers interact with students and a host of other ways in which the school indirectly expresses its values.

A student learns from his perceptions of adult roles as he tries to see how they "fit" and he develops particular attitudes about the world around him from the way he perceives these interactions.

These interactions not only demonstrate a wide range of personalities, but also satisfy 'people needs' like identity, belonging, power, meaning and change. Such needs appear to be congruent to all people in all facets of work:

> IDENTITY - the need to be a unique person, to be noticed and recognized as special; to gain insight into knowing and assessing personal strength, to compensate for weaknesses.
>
> BELONGING - the need to belong to someone or something, to be a part of something, a member accepted and wanted.
>
> MEANING - the need to have events in one's life add up to something, self-acceptance and self-esteem, high expectations and hope for the future.
>
> CHANCE - the need to have variety and positive change, to avoid ruts, to continually grow as a person, to resculpt a grand design that will nourish, restore and regenerate goals, objectives, priorities and timetables (Youngs 1978).

How young people deal with stress during their adult years is determined to a great extent by what occurs during their formative years. It is not only what happens during the early years of life, but oftentimes what does not happen that is important. Scientific studies have shown how important early experiences are in influencing later behavior. Early childhood studies have shown that children who get adequate stimulation,

where adults meet their needs during periods of great dependency, develops a sense of trust in others; whereas children deprived of this kind of experience lose trust in others and engage in unacceptable behavior as a means of coping with stress.

The child uses play to deal with anxieties. Children may be anxious about many things: about being little, about being helpless, about being left alone, about being left out or not liked, about failing to please. Many of these anxieties persist to some extent throughout life as we all know. Play is a way of reducing one's anxious feelings. A child can play at being big and strong, a cowboy or a soldier with two guns or a policeman or even a wicked witch. A child can make things happen in play as he or she wants. The child can be the one who does the spanking or scolding or the one who goes off and leaves the little ones crying. He or she can comfort them and care for them. A child can do things to others or to dolls or even to materials instead of having things done to him/her. Dramatic play is a great healer of fears. Playing doctor makes having "shots" less upsetting. Escaping into roles such as these makes it easier to live in a real world where one is only a little boy or a little girl bossed around by almost everyone else.

Even when we are older, we continue to need to escape into fantasy sometimes. We imagine ourselves

behaving with great bravery or being very beautiful, and we feel better able to live with those somewhat more limited selves we posses. Paul Bunyun legends grew out of such feelings because people may need to imagine themselves more powerful than they are. They can, at least, enjoy the thought. We may imagine ourselves "telling off" a teacher or taking revenge on someone we don't like. We wouldn't really do these things but imagining them relieves feelings and leaves more energy to use in the actual everyday situations we face. We are better able to sit in the class because we have drained off some irritations. It is a desirable thing when we use it only to escape from facing real situations (Baker, 1975).

It is not often acceptable to fight physically against or flee from the opposition within educational settings: The condescending peer, rules and regulations of many teachers throughout the day, parental guidelines that are not always congruent with an individual's own set of desires and values, and school policy. These point to just a few of the problems with which students must learn to cope.

Some youngsters contend that much of their school experience involves forced choices of alternatives that result in periods of personal quandary or confusion within their everyday lives. These persistent quandaries promote a continual state of smoldering, frustration and

mental suffering that are indeed stressful. What happens next may be a translation of mental suffering into physical expression.

Dr. Lee Salk (1972) stated that "when children are unable to cope effectively with the stresses of their lives, they sometimes show both psychological and physical growth difficulties." During early childhood, the child is totally dependent upon adults for survival and therefore tends to lack the resources and know-how (considered as acceptable behavior by adults) for coping assertively and effectively with any kind of stress.

The signal an infant has for showing reaction is crying, and the only mechanism available for eliminating that stress is to go off into a world of sleep. In a sense, all the unpleasantness is obliterated by this form of withdrawal. Unless a child is helped to cope with the stresses, through competent and efficient care during this time of total dependency, crying and/or withdrawal can become a characteristic personality pattern for dealing with any form of unpleasantness.

Dr. Salk's findings say that infants subjected to long or frequent periods of stress do not become stronger and more effective in dealing with problems later on, in fact they learn to reuse infantile methods for dealing with later stresses. Children learn to "tune out" the means for finding comfort from the unpleasant frustrations they experience.

Adults can establish a similar pattern. Everyone can cite an example of an adult who reverts to some form of behavior (such as excessive drinking, prolonged patterns of sleep, and other unacceptable behaviors) rather than coming to terms with the problem and and solving it.

While the major stresses during infancy are brought about by the frustration of infantile needs, Dr. Salk suggests that the needs of infants are greatly underestimated. He maintains that the period of infancy is an extremely stressful period of life, because there is a lack of exchange in verbal communication and understanding. Adults do not always know or understand the reason for an infant's stress (Salk, 1972).

When children go to school, parents are usually the first to detect the cues of stress. Countless parents have talked about their kindergarten child who, after being enrolled in school for the first time, exhibits either stuttering, bedwetting, nail biting, increased thumb sucking, nightmares, loss of appetite, or even physical complaints of headaches and stomachaches. Under prolonged stress children often show an aversion to even going to school. If and when this occurs, perceptive teachers should find out what is going on and determine the source of stress. An attempt should be made to eliminate that stress so that the child doesn't "turn off" altogether about going to school.

Many of the major stress reactions for children center around the school. Children are fearful about the reactions of other children, the teachers, and they worry about what they are missing out on at home while they are away. Since they encounter new teachers, they fear the unknown discipline techniques that a teacher might use, "If they aren't good." It is interesting to note, however, that their greatest fear is wondering each day if their parents will return to pick them up, or return to the home environment at the end of a given day (Baker, 1975).

For these reasons, educators should encourage and explain the general outline of the school day to the child; provide consistent and fair discipline and order; and prepare the child for the pleasures, satisfactions, opportunities, difficulties, and rewards that a school environment has to offer. Educators should also actively encourage parents to be emotionally and physically supportive during these important beginning school years.

During these school years children see many changes. Adolescence is a period when some of the most noticeable physical and emotional changes occur. Dramatic body growth and change are highly visible within the adolescent. It is a time of fast childhood, prolonged adolescence, a prolonged period of education, and only gradual entrance into the rights and responsibilities of adulthood. There is a very social and economic distinction. Young-

sters especially complain of being plagued by uncertainty, confusion and even despair at this state of development (Salk, 1972).

Much of the stress within the stage of adolescence has to do with this fact: it is extremely difficult for individuals who are strong, energetic, vigorous, determined, and potentially capable of living active, independent lives to be in some aspects still children, and in some aspects treated like dependent children; protected, watched, and all too often kept tightly in line.

Our schools as well as society, project somewhat inconsistent attitudes toward youth. On the one hand, they are urged to exhibit independent critical thinking skills--being reminded how bold, enterpreneurial, active, heroic, assertive, and adventurous their forefathers were. Yet, on the other hand society asks them to delay rewards and gratification, stick to a course of study, curb their desire for independence, asks them for obedience to the demands of authorities; to submit to the authority of education, parents, and policy, regardless of how confined they feel or how such demands are in conflict with their own value system (Smith, 1976).

Society tends to glorify youths who have learned how to effectively deal with conflict ("my second child just never gave me any problems"), or avoid conflicts, or have learned how to play the right adult games. Those

youths who do feel that inevitable conflict of what they desire as opposed to others, however, have yet another measurement of their comfusion, turmoil and ambiguity.

Adolescence differs in that the degree to which such a struggle takes place is usually greater and more visible than other stages. Decisions of lasting significance must be made and commitment of time and energy is required. In short, the "puberty stricken", as teachers call them, must go about making decisions about their future life. We often think that throughout out pursuit of living, our lives should have more "flow"; that is consistency timeliness, and relevancy. Yet, while adolescents undergo these changes (causing frequent episodes of stress, moody introspection, confusion, and anxious moments of despair) in their struggle for independence and intimacy, they are asked who they are, what they want to do, how and with whom they want to spend the rest of their lives; we ask them to make decisions of lasting significance. These factors produce in youngsters a great deal of stress, often exhibited through disciplinary problems, continual absenteeism, psychosomatic behavior, vandalism, episodic moodiness that turns into chronic and severe depression (if persistent and prolonged, suicide can result), suspicion, relentless stretches of melancholy, withdrawal, acts of delinquency, prolonged feelings of worthlessness, severe disorders of the skin and metabolic diseases.

Physicians diagnose more "acute adolescent turmoil", as they call it, than they do direct physical illnesses for the adolescent patients they see (Youngs, 1981).

Young people themselves are often (but not always) the best judges of when their stress has gotten out of control and when they need to turn to others. Teachers, administrators, and counselors who have proven themselves as warm, confident, and trusting adults will have students seek them out year after year. Youths need to know that there are those within the educational setting whom they can trust and talk to comfortably and reassuringly. Students need educators who recognize their need to grow up and assert their own authority and initiative as they establish momentum and test their own beliefs and values.

Stress and the Gifted Student

The creative process has been defined as consisting of four stages: preparation, incubation, illumination and verification. Gifted students often find the preparation (academic discipline) stage very easy. But if creativity is expected, these students will need help in the incubation techniques. The reduction of stress plays a great part in this procedure.

Studies by Rothney and Koopman (1958) and Gowan (1971) showed that parents, teachers, peers and others exert unusual pressure upon gifted children. These pressures appear to cause drops in creative production.

During the low creative potential, gifted students are exposed to all kinds of school pressures and influences. In The Academically Talented Student and Guidance, Gowan and Bruch (1971) wrote that observations of gifted students point to a need for helping the creative child to understand the balance of initiative and joy, from creativity and possible counter feelings of immobilization and guilt. Thus, this student "sometimes needs help with the depressed cycle he feels after creative effort... and help to avoid anxiety about what others think of him." It is also important to help students deal with the feelings of neglect, loneliness and peer pressure, through self-awareness. Thus the child will learn to deal with these pressures without bitterness and withdrawal, Torrance (1968) found that by the fourth grade, children are apparently so accustomed to being evaluated and criticized on everything, that the instructions freeing them from stressful situations had little effect. A study by J. L. French (1965) reported that one thousand and eight hundred of the dropouts in Pennsylvania of that year were high ability students who complained about the demands and high expectancies they confronted in school.

Eighteen gifted seventh grade students were chosen to work together in developing a coping model of integrate with independent study (Williams, 1979). Over a three-year period (1974-1977) these students were made aware

of the model and they were encouraged to be open and frank about their experiences with the model and with sharing the positive and/or negative changes that they sensed. A group of teachers helped construct a series of attitude scales and inventories that identified coping behaviors.

The coping model that resulted was as follows:

Step 1 - Gathering concepts (student learns to accept uncertainty). Coping Activities fantasy journeys, synectics, dream building, creative dramatics, observation activities.

Step 2 - Recognizing the problem (student learns to accept confusion, external pressures). Activities: discussion, emotion--memory exercises, pantomimes.

Step 3 - Developing a working hypothesis (student learns to control consciousness). Activities: concentration exercises, discussion, observation exercises, improvisations.

Step 4 - Designing the investigation (student learns to cope with fear of unknown, uncertainty). Activities: silent meditation, relaxation exercises, role-playing, leadership skills. (If the student finds a new concept or new problem at this stage he/she must learn to accept wrongness, to deal with fear of criticism. A new investigation may have to be developed. Discussion and role-playing should be used.)

Step 5 - A possible solution (student must learn to deal with excitement, desire of success). Activities: discussion and values clarification exercises.

Step 6 - Confirming or disapproving (student must learn to handle internal feelings of success and failure and external criticism).

Students indicated that the most beneficial parts of the model were the oral communication components. Discussions of fantasies, dreams, role-playing and truck

circles were ranked high. The students decided that these activities were integral in providing a release for feelings of confusion, fear, and anxiety of the present and the future (Williams, 1979).

Stress and the Mentally Handicapped

In the mental retardation literature, anxiety is often suggested as being a consequence of failure for these individuals. Anxiety is a stressful affect that has strong physiological correlates. Normally, anxiety serves as a signal to the organism; in moderate amounts it has an alerting and arousing function which helps individuals to avoid danger by preparing for action of some sort, including defensive behaviors. To the extent that the threat in the situation is vague and undifferentiated, it is difficult for the individual, especially when he or she is experiencing intense anxiety, to mobilize resources for appropriate actions. This is because the retarded are slower in their cognitive development, especially concepts for ordering complicated events, differentiating self from other, assessing cause and effect and taking action (Cruickshank, 1980). For a variety of reasons it is likely that the retarded are less able to adaptively utilize the signal properties of anxiety. Camperione and Brown (1977) stated that the retarded are not motivated to apply strategies to memory tasks, and this may well reflect, in part, a failure to

respond to anxiety as a signal for action. Difficulty in memorization should lead to arousal and alerting, which in turn should elicit a search for a better method of approaching the task and should eventuate in discovery of the best possible solution.

If anxiety is indeed a by-product of failure, if the retarded as a group are thought to fail frequently, and if they are not able to deal effectively with anxiety, then one might predict that there would be more anxiety in the retarded than the non-retarded. Robinson and Robinson (1976) summarize the literature as strongly supporting the assumption that the retarded are more anxious. Hutt and Gibby (1976) qualify the findings suggesting that the assumption may hold true for overt anxiety but results are more equivocal for covert and basic anxiety.

Occupational Stress of Teachers

Stress is a normal condition of living in today's complex society. It is a condition to which teachers and educators are not immune. Educators today are faced with more pressure, more aggression, more change, and more conflict than ever before. It is now possible to cram much more into an educator, teacher or administrator's day, thanks to computers, intercoms, dictaphones, and other "timesaving" devices which have measurably increased the stress of life.

Teacher stress or burnout has reached epidemic

proportion in some school districts. Its symptoms may include exhaustion, tension, and various physical ailments. Job-related stress has diminished the satisfaction that many teachers derive from their work, caused some educators to choose alternative careers, and lessened the energy and creativity that many outstanding teachers can bring to their classroom (Sparks, 1979).

Classroom teachers are beset by demands for accountability, increasing violence in the school, decreasing job security and mobility and the expectation that public education be responsible for the amelioration of a variety of school problems. Seemingly, teaching has become a more demanding and stressful task. In order to understand teacher job satisfaction better, a workshop on the subject of teacher stress was offered as one of the forty-eight in-service sessions available to sixteen hundred teachers from seven suburban school districts in Wayne County, Michigan. The purpose of the session was to provide an opportunity for teachers to identify the sources of work-related stress. A questionnaire was distributed to gather information from the participants on feelings and attitudes regarding their work.

The group was divided among elementary, junior high/middle school and high school teachers--twenty-three percent of the respondents were elementary teachers,

thirty-two percent high school and forty-five were junior high/middle school teachers. Eighty-nine percent of the respondents were classroom teachers with the other eleven percent including counselors and various other specialists and consultants. Sixty percent of this group had been teaching eleven years or longer, and ninety-four percent had been teaching over four years.

Several items concerned some aspect of job satisfaction. Forty-six percent of those teachers were dissatisfied with their job as a whole and an identical percentage said that, if they had it to do all over again, they would not choose teaching as a career. One-quarter of the sampled teachers indicated that they did not plan to stay in teaching until retirement and an additional thirty percent were uncertain if they would remain in the profession until retirement. Fifty-four percent said that it is at least somewhat likely that they will change occupations in the next five years and a similar number of respondents claimed that they would switch jobs if they could find one with equivalent pay and fringe benefits. Seventy percent of these teachers indicated that they frequently or always left school physically or emotionally exhausted. Thirty-six percent said that their work frequently or almost always interfered with their home life.

The stage is set for job-related stress when involvement in work is high, but feelings of control or power in the work setting are limited. Eighty-nine percent of the sampled teachers perceived that they were very much personally involved in their work, and sixty-four percent reported that their job provided them with good feelings. However, feelings of powerlessness were also high: Seventy percent of the respondents felt trapped in their present jobs, and ninety-one percent said that they had little or no influences in curriculum or policy decisions in their school.

A second potential source of job dissatisfaction is the nature of interpresonal relationships in the work environment. When asked to evaluate the quality of relationships they had with colleagues, students, and administrators, sixty-eight percent of the teachers indicated that they had high quality relationships with their peers. Fifty-two percent reported that they had high quality relationships with their administrators. It is likely that low quality teacher/administrator relationships will produce stress and discontent for everyone involved.

A third possible cause of job dissatisfaction relates to perceptions of role conflicts. Seventy-three percent of the respondents felt pulled in different directions by the expectations of students, administrators and the general public. The cost to teachers of attempting to

be all things to all people may be a heavy dose of guilt, frustration and tension (Sparks, 1979).

In May 1979, a data-gathering instrument was mailed to five-percent random sample of Minnesota public school teachers (n=2,096). The model was built upon the work of Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (1978). Of the nine hundred and sixty questionnaires returned, twenty three were unusable, yielding a response of forty-five percent (n=973). There were almost equal percentages of elementary (forty-nine percent) and secondary teachers (fifty-one percent). Sixty-two percent were female and thirty-eight male. Twelve percent of the respondents were from small districts (fewer than eight hundred students), sixteen percent from medium-sized districts, (eight hundred--seventeen hundred and ninety-nine), fifty-nine percent from the larger districts (eighteen hundred or more) and twelve and five tenths percent from large urban districts. Twenty-one percent of the teachers reported working in their present teaching position three to five years; and fifty-nine percent of the respondents have been in their present teaching position three to five years; and fifty-nine percent of the respondents have been in their present positions six or more years.

An eighteen item general well being schedule, designed to measure selected work condition factors, was included in the survey. Results suggested that many

teachers must content with descrepancies between work values and occupational rewards available from the school environment. Also indicated was that stressors vary and affect teachers differently; consequently, some teachers are at a higher risk for health problems than others.

Some teaching job stressors are shared with other occupations. They center around: (1) job content or the challenge of the task itself (stimulating or interesting work, little chance of utilizing skills or developing new skills, autonomy, variety, complexity and qualitative and quantitative overload), (2) resource adequacy (lack) of help, equipment, time, authority and necessary information), and (3) financial rewards (low pay, lack of job security and fringe benefits). The data clearly illustrated that teachers value challenging work and expect to have the resources necessary to render the best services to their students. For some, however, expectations are unmet by the teaching environment. There is an unsatisfied need of teachers for job security, good salary and fringe benefits. Disruptive events in one dimension can create lasting problems in other aspects of worklife, as well as in other areas of life, such as family relations. Narrowing the gap between what is important to teachers and the rewards available is one strategy to reduce stress. Issues such as improvements in job security, salary and availability

of necessary resources must be addressed. Collective action, rather than individual attempts to effect change is necessary.

Some stressors are unique to teaching. A number of factors were found to be problematic for teachers. One group of stressful events centers around work conditions that affect teachers' work and over which they have little control, particularly their success with students, overcrowded classrooms, reorganization of classes and implementing board of education curriculum goals. Other stressful events center around time demands of teachers and why they feel they have so little time to devote to actual instruction. Some of these items reflect the need to comply with laws affecting students with special needs and responding to social problems.

Another issue confronting teachers is the conflict between managing problem behaviors and accomplishing teacher objectives. Students vandalism, threat of verbal and/or physical abuse and student disinterest all pose problems which affect the time, quality and attitude of actual instruction (Griffin, Needly, and Svendsen, 1981).

Pardes (1980) indicated that overcrowded classrooms, lack of administrative support and lack of resources can lead to teacher frustration, disillusionment and "eventual incapacitation". Reducing class size and improving safety are among major concerns of teachers' unions and associations. Other dimensions of work that

affect teachers' overall feelings perceived stress center around relationships with others, particularly the principal, who allocates resources, provides support to teachers in dealing with students, parents and community groups and provides feedback to teachers about the quality of their work (Lortie, 1975).

Teacher Stress as it Effects Learning

Kurt Lewin, among the earliest field psychologists, argued that behavior is not a simple function of first stimulus and then response, but rather a complex set of actions that develop out of an interaction of a field of stimulus objects and the person. It isn't just one thing that causes stress but a complex grouping.

In an experiment Lewin (as quoted in Lauderdale, 1981) arranged students in three separate classrooms. In one classroom, the teacher was instructed to use highly directive or authoritarian procedures in teaching the class. For example, the teacher would explain that the first hour would be devoted to arithmetic and there would be no discussion or consideration of doing reading first or some other activity. The teacher would decide when the next activity was to start and what it would be. The students were given no opportunity to ask for more time to work on a given area or permitted any choice in what subject they could study at a given time.

In the second classroom, the teacher was told to use a very non-directive approach in teaching the class. Essentially the teacher told the students that he would be a resource to help them in their learning and then basically let them do whatever they wanted to during the day.

The third teacher was told to use a democratic style in that the teacher would discuss with the students the various areas which they would need to work on during the day and during the week. He would then involve them in a discussion about how they should study for a given area, which item they should study first, and what would be the best way of going about it.

Lewin then maintained these three teaching or leadership approaches in the experiment for several weeks and made measures of two dimensions. One dimension was the productivity of each group. Production was defined in terms of the amount of learning that occurred and homework accomplished. The other measure was the degree of aggression manifested amoung the students. Aggression consisted of fights, pushing, and other boisterous conduct.

The study indicated that initially the authoritarian model produced greater productivity, but over several weeks it also generated the greatest level of aggressive behavior which began to detract from high-level productivity. Democratic leadership, on the other hand,

was more time-consuming but, as time passed, it proved to be the most productive form of leadership and produced the least amount of aggressive behavior. Laissez-faire leadership had the lowest productivity results and produced levels of aggressive behavior almost as high as those under authoritarian leadership. The experiment indicated the superiority of democratic leadership with an emphasis on participation and communication.

Lewin's findings stressed the importance of grounding or anchoring the individual within the work group as the most important means of meeting motivational needs and ensuring high productivity and low frustration among group members. The study suggest that in a classroom more learning will take place if the teachers is relaxed enough himself/herself to allow a democratic and relaxed atmosphere for the student.

In studies made by Pearlin and Schooler (1978) it was found that teachers with greater stress have more somatic symptoms, higher levels of anxiety, and psychological difficulties. It was shown that it is not only clear that job stress negatively affects teachers, which likely affects absenteeism, health care costs, work fitness and productivity, but job stress also affects the classroom environment, the teaching/ learning process and the attainment of educational goals and objectives.

Dr. Alfred Block (Walsh 1979) identified, in his studies at the University of California in 1976, a number of conditions characteristic of burnout or of its effects on teachers. The leading characteristic of burnout was a cynical and dehumanized perception of students, accompanied by a deterioration of the quality of teaching.

Fuller (1969) reported that high anxiety, on the part of teachers, has an undersirable effect on their students and can also have negative effect on student performance. It can also affect the manner in which teachers handle responsibilities in the educational setting. Clinical observations by Fuller revealed that in situations where teachers are under stress, such as when the atmosphere of the school is uneasy, the survival concerns of teachers increase and take precedence over direct teaching activities. When under stress, teachers in the study viewed their needs in the following order: (1) survival training, (2) survival training and performance skills, (3) methods on how to make an impact on students, and (4) concerns about increasing what pupils learn.

Koon (1971) found that high-anxiety teachers use significantly less task-oriented behavior with students and that they tend to administer fewer positive reinforcements. Others have found that students of high-anxiety

teachers tend to be more disruptive than students of low-anxiety teachers. These studies suggest that at some level, anxiety in classroom teachers may be detrimental to themselves and to their students (Youngs, 1978).

Student Stress as it Effects Classroom Environment

Physical assaults against teachers are increasing. According to NEA's 1979 nationwide Teacher Opinion Poll an estimated 110,000 teachers, one out of every 20 were physically attacked by students on school property during that school year. The 110,000 victims represent an increase of 57 percent over the estimated 70,000 teachers who were attached during the 1978 school year. Eric Erikson, a noted psychoanalyst, has said, "The most deadly of all sins is the multilation of a child's spirit." But perhaps even worse, because a teacher teaches the child, is the multilation of a teacher's spirit (McGuire, 1979).

School can be and very often is a painful place for children. "Pain is the most general term. What is meant by painful? It may refer to bodily hurt, to mental anxiety, or to both a physical cause of discomfort and the consequent mental anguish." The important idea to keep in mind is that painful school experiences affect the child's mind, body, behavior and spirit (Schultz, 1980).

It is not difficult to find examples of painful school experiences. Some common examples include feeling afraid to say something in class, feeling sad and lonely and not being able to share these feelings

with anyone, going to recess and being the last one picked to play kickball, going to a new school and making new friends, being in the lowest reading group (or any low class grouping) and knowing that other students think you are slow and not as able as they are, and having to remember all the rules. Very often, stress has been found to be a common denominator in all such painful school experiences.

Very often the stress felt by youngsters is exhibited through disciplinary problems. Are physical assaults against teachers increasing because student stress in increasing? Does student stress effect learning and the classroom environment?

In 1978 the United States Congress commissioned the "Safe School Study" to investigate and then present a comprehensive look at the cause and effects of school violence. Stress in students was a significant finding in the study. Stress-causing factors were listed as: (1) large schools and large class size, (2) students not treated openly, fairly, and equally, and (3) high school students perceive the teachers as teaching irrelevant subject matter (Pauker, 1980).

Anxiety, self-concept, and the ability to engage in deliberate thinking are closely interrelated. The child in school constantly faces situations whose demands he must compare with his own resouces. Whenever his assessment of situational demands leads

him to conclude that they are greater than his resources he faces a situation, for him a dangerous one, in which he feels the promise of humiliation is great enough to call for escape.

Many children in most classrooms grow steadily in their power to cope with classroom danger. In any event, the humiliation which comes from classroom failure is usually short-lived. Some children experience their failures more intensely than others, however. Also, some of the children come to school having experienced greater failure at home than others. Some teachers are more punitive and some classroom groups more humiliating than others. Whatever the case, it seems safe to say that all children have experienced humiliation in failure severe enough to be wary of its possible recurrence (Lighthall, 1964).

SUMMARY

The influences which stress exerts on schoolwork are generally difficult to assess. Evidence from clinical studies point clearly and consistently to the desruptive and distracting power of stress over most kinds of thinking. Experimental evidence is less consistent. There is apparent evidence that anxiety can either inhibit or facilitate intellectual performance.

The systematic research on teacher burnout and student stress is scanty. Few comprehensive studies of the effects of violence and its psychological

and psychophysiological sequel in classroom teachers who have been its target have been made. For a variety of political reasons the quantitative and qualitative extent of assaults is not widely acknowledged. Maslach (1978) has said,

> An understanding of the stress facing staff persons, and of the way he/she copes with them, is critical for insuring that a person delivers high-quality care and teaching to the child.

Alarming as much of the violence and other stress-creating conditions are, a positive approach is possible and necessary. Maslach (1978) says,

> Safeguards can be instituted to prevent the emotional exhaustion and negative attitudes of burnout...Burnout seems to be lower for those helping professionals who have access to some sort of social-professional support systems.

Students cope better when teachers give them more balanced perspective, help them with their struggles and offer various alternatives for handling threatening situations.

The National Education Association urges its local affiliates, in cooperation with local school authorities, to develop stress-management programs that will facilitate the recognition, prevention, and treatment of stress-related problems (Moe, 1979). Colleges and Universities are also beginning to deal with stress prevention

for their staffs. The Prevention and Management of Educational Stress workshops have been presented to thousands of teachers and administrators in many states.

Suggestions for preventing teacher stress include:

1) Exercise, if you feel tired exercise will help revive you.

2) Leave your teaching at school.

3) Develop an interest that takes your mind off the tensions of the school day.

4) Get plenty of sleep.

5) Don't feel guilty because you haven't lived up to your ideal of the perfect teacher.

6) Don't worry, worry has never undone a wrong or prevented a problem.

7) Learn to say no.

8) Be good to yourself.

9) Always have something to look forward to doing.

10) Keep learning.

11) Travel

12) Don't schedule all your leisure hours.

13) Set realistic and flexible goals for yourself.

14) Take a sabbatical or leave of absence.

Studies show that teacher stress is important and needs attention but of equal importance is student stress. Studies have shown that educators must be more aware of the effects of stress upon their students.

The following suggestions are to help students deal with stress more effectively.

1) An emphasis must be in helping youngsters develop an sense of trust in others.

2) Educators must be knowledgeable and perceptive about major transitions young people face.

3) Students must know precisely what is expected of them.

4) Teaching rules and regulations helps youngsters feel more secure and capable of limits.

5) Discipline represents rules and regulations that protect the rights and integrity of individuals. Punishment represents the price you pay for violating those rules within any setting. Students need to understand those concepts.

6) Provide a stimulating and enriching environment that invites students to continue their natural curiosity toward learning.

7) It is crucially important for educators to show respect for the integrity of children in helping them achieve a sense of self-esteem and the capacity to cope with frustration and stress.

8) The social and academic environment should be interesting and challenging.

9) Help students gain a sense of mastery by coping.

10) Actively encourage parents to be supportive.

11) Assist youngsters in developing a greater capacity to strengthen their general resistance and deal with pressures without developing a stress reaction.

Teach students how to set priorities, order priorities, set goals and realistic timetables, structure time, get involved, learn from failure, set long-range plans, identify particularly stressful events, cultivate habits that reduce stress, learn to be in control, identify symptoms that indicate they have exceeded their stress threshold, understand the importance of proper physical and mental conditioning, learn how to react to stress-

ful situations they cannot change, recognize and utilize their own resources and actualize their full potential. Teachers must recognize of themselves and their students that it is the person inside that counts. "What the teacher is, sometimes speaks so loudly, pupils cannot hear what he says." (Fuller, 1969).

CONCLUSION

Research supports the thesis that stress does effect the learning environment and learning itself but it does not clearly state that the effect of stress as related to learning is completely negative or positive. Research results indicate that self resistence to undue stress in students lies largely in what the teacher believes about himself and also about his students. These beliefs determine the teacher's behavior and are often transmitted to the students and also influence their performance.

The writers have gained greater insights into the various aspects of stress, and have come to a new realization of the extreme importance for the teacher to be sensitive to her/his needs as related to personal and professional stress and to those of students. The following fable (author unknown) suggests a way to combat stress in teaching/learning situations and in the larger arena of life.

Fable: A proud Oak grew upon the bank of a stream.

For a full hundred years it had withstood the buffeting of the winds, but one day there came a violent storm. The great oak fell with a mighty crash into the swollen river and was carried toward the sea.

Later the oak tree came to rest on the shore where reeds were growing. The tree was amazed to see the reeds standing upright.

"How ever did you manage to weather that terrible storm?" he asked. "I have stood up against many a storm, but this one was too strong for me." "That's just it," replied the reed. "All these years you have stubbornly pitted your great strength against the wind. You were to proud to yield a little. I, on the other hand, knowing my weakness, just bend and let the wind blow over me without trying to resist it. The harder the wind blows, the more I humble myself, so here I am!"
Moral: It is better to bend than to break.

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